

MORE ABOUT DOCTOR BRICKELL'S "NATURAL HISTORY OF NORTH CAROLINA"

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When I wrote my little account entitled "The Entomology of Doctor Brickell's 'Natural History of North Carolina' " for the June, 1928, issue of this Journal, volume III of Meisel's "Bibliography of American Natural History" had not made its appearance, and being unfamiliar with ornithological literature I was unaware of the "List of Faunal Publications Relating to North American Ornithology" by Elliott Coues. Both of these bibliographies make it plain that John Brickell, M.D., was not the author of the book in question and that he brazenly appropriated the work of John Lawson. I knew, of course, that book piracy existed in early days and that it flourished even after the Copyright Act of Queen Anne (1709-10), but I naïvely supposed that naturalists could never be guilty of such a practice.

John Lawson, the rightful author, was a Scotchman who had been sent to America in September, 1700, as surveyor-general of North Carolina. He explored the Carolinas with a party of five white men and four Indians, traveling on foot and by canoe and accumulating much knowledge about the Indians and the natural history of the area in connection with his duties as a surveyor. It is stated that the natives eventually became suspicious of his operations and that he was put to death in 1712 by the Tuscarora Indians. Goode states that he was burnt at the stake in 1709. A Swiss Baron de Graffenreid seized at the same time was permitted to ransom himself. William Byrd, in his "History of the Dividing Line between Virginia and Carolina" (ed. 1866, p. 174, 214), said that Lawson "was waylaid and had his Throat cut from Ear to Ear."

Lawson's impressions and observations were recorded first by him under the title "Journal of 1000 Miles! Travel among the Indians, with a Description of North Carolina." This appeared,

according to Allibone, in quarto form in London in 1700. Then it appeared under the title, "A New Voyage to Carolina; Containing the Exact Description and Natural History of that Country; Together with the Present State thereof and a Journal of a Thousand Miles Travel'd thro' several Nations of Indians. Giving a particular Account of their Customs, Manners &c." (London, 1709). It was also issued in numbers in 1708 as a part of Stevens's "Collection of Voyages." Other London editions with slightly different title pages appeared in 1711, 1714 and 1718, and in this country it was reprinted in 1860 and in 1903. A German translation was printed in Hamburg in 1722.

In 1723, Dr. John Brickell appeared on the scene as the author of a work entitled "The Natural History of North Carolina, with an Account of the Trade, Manners and Customs of the Christian and Indian Inhabitants. Illustrated with Copper-Plates, whereon are curiously Engraved the Map of the Country, several strange Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Snakes, Insects, Trees, and Plants, &c." This was published in Dublin and later editions appeared from the same city in 1737, 1739, and 1743. Of the 1737 edition of Brickell's work, Coues said, "The material for this work was stolen from Lawson with scarcely the disguise of change of form." The fact that it was stolen four times is proof that Lawson's account must have been popular and profitable. At this date it continues to be interesting and sprightly.

In my former paper I called attention to another work by Brickell, a folio, "Catalogue of American Trees and Shrubs, which will endure the climate of England," published in London in 1739. I strongly suspect that this too was stolen from Lawson, because in the "Practical Husbandman & Planter," vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 73-112, there is attributed to Lawson a paper called "An abstract of several sorts of trees, shrubs, etc., which growing in the remotest parts of North America will undoubtedly prosper well in all parts of Great Britain; to which is prefixed a short essay concerning the easy and profitable propagation of them in our English nurseries." Apparently nothing of Lawson's was safe from Brickell or Brickell's publisher. Lawson was dead when the thefts took place, and at that time eminent lawyers argued that there were no property rights in ideas.

Mr. B. L. Robinson, who wrote in "Rhodora" in 1916, found that there were two Brickells—both physicians and both Johns. One was born in Ireland about 1749 and lived in Savannah, Georgia, for about thirty years, dying there December 22, 1809. He was a good observer of local vegetation and corresponded with and sent plants to Muhlenberg and Elliott. He also contributed papers on botany and medicine to the Medical Repository. The other John Brickell, author of the "Natural History of North Carolina," settled at Edenton, N. C., in the earlier half of the eighteenth century. J. Bryan Grimes, in an introductory note in the facsimile reprint of the "Natural History of North Carolina," published in 1911, states that although based on Lawson's work, Brickell's book is nearly twice as long and contains much additional matter on the medical side. He also says that John Brickell and his brother, Rev. Matthias Brickell, came to Carolina with Governor Burrington. John settled at Edenton and was on the grand jury of the whole province in 1731; he was also about that time a member of a mission to the Cherokee Indians, and took part in an expedition to the interior. Shortly afterward he returned to England and nothing additional on his life seems to be recorded.

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